

May 17, 2022

Orono City Council  
City of Orono  
2750 Kelley Parkway  
Orono, MN 55356  
[VIA US MAIL AND EMAIL]

**RE: Long Lake Fire Department**

Members of the Orono City Council,

Since receiving your undated Notice of Termination of Agreement and Contract for Fire Protection in approximately April 2021, the City of Long Lake has been evaluating our options for future fire service for our city. As the City of Long Lake has been operating a Fire Department since 1915 that has been honorably and effectively serving our city and others, we continue to believe it is in the best interest of our cities, our residents in both cities, and most importantly, our firefighters, if we maintain the status quo and continue to manage our Fire Department. This desire by Orono to take control of the Long Lake Fire Department (LLFD) has created significant tension between the two cities and, most importantly, uncertainty and stress among our firefighters.

Orono has not provided Long Lake with any actionable information as to how we have failed to properly manage our Fire Department to the point which requires Orono to take over management of it. We do realize you are our biggest customer and that your citizens and businesses fund the majority of the annual operating expenses, but both cities have worked together to ensure those funds are managed appropriately. Please provide us with any information you may have to the contrary. We feel our long-standing Fire Advisory Board (FAB) in which both cities have two Council members, as well as staff on the FAB, has served as a good model for ensuring both cities have equal representation and the ability to guide the direction and budget of the LLFD. If you believe these processes can be improved to facilitate greater collaboration, we are willing to discuss such a proposal.

With this being said, if the City of Orono continues to believe it needs to take over control of the LLFD, the City of Long Lake needs to receive more concrete information about Orono's proposal to determine the best course of action for our city. Specifically, before we determine whether we want to be a buyer or seller of major fire department assets, including full ownership of Station 1, we need more information from Orono about the value and potential services being offered. Therefore, we request that the City of Orono provide us with the financial and other information requested in the attached Exhibit A, in writing, regarding your intent as a city to purchase the LLFD and take over management of it.

As costs continue to rise at an unprecedented rate and volunteer models have encountered increasing recruitment and retention issues, it cannot be debated that the national trend for delivery of fire services into the future is a model of consolidation of services and not separation. Plainly, we should be discussing other possible fire service merger/consolidation opportunities and not division of resources. Independent of such consolidation and without reasonable justification, Long Lake does not see the benefit in transitioning out of the current ownership model that has served our

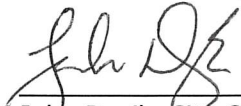
communities and others so well for so many years. To preserve the best outcome for all of our citizens, we continue to suggest working together to extend our present successful model. However, if the Orono City Council insists on demanding ownership and control of the LLFD, then Long Lake requires a formal response from the Orono City Council to the inquiries on the attached Exhibit A.

Sincerely,

Long Lake City Council



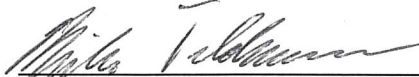
Charlie Miner, Mayor



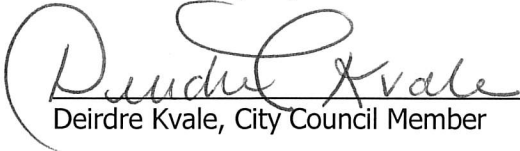
John Dyvik, City Council Member



Gina Joyce, City Council Member



Mike Feldmann, City Council Member



Deirdre Kvale, City Council Member

## **EXHIBIT A**

### Financial and Other Terms Questions for Orono's Proposed Purchase of LLFD Assets (Please provide detailed and specific answers to each of the following inquiries.)

1. If a sale of the LLFD were to occur, what would the proposed organizational structure look like? What would happen to current LLFD employees?
2. Does Orono desire to purchase all assets of the LLFD? If less than all, designate those to be purchased in your proposal.
3. What is Orono's proposed purchase price for Station 1?
4. What is Orono's proposed purchase price for the LLFD Pension Plan?
5. What is Orono's proposed purchase price for all previously purchased assets of the LLFD (e.g. vehicles, equipment, furniture, gear, etc.)?
6. What is Orono's proposed purchase price for those items previously donated to the City of Long Lake for use by the LLFD (Those items owned 100% by Long Lake, e.g. Polaris 6 x 6, B11 fire boat, etc.)?
7. How does Orono propose to make payment to Long Lake? (i.e. Cash payment? In kind services? Both?) If something other than cash payment for all purchased assets is proposed, provide specific details as to what in kind services are offered and for what duration.
8. If Long Lake were to agree to sell LLFD assets to Orono, when do you propose this would take place? Outline your proposed transition plan.
9. If a sale of the LLFD were to occur, what would it be called going forward (i.e. Would Orono retain the LLFD name or change it)?
10. If a sale of the LLFD were to occur, and Long Lake was to receive services in some form from it while under Orono control, would the Fire Advisory Board be retained? Would Long Lake have a voice on that Board similar to the one Orono has under the present model?
11. If Long Lake was to receive fire service from Orono, what would be the cost of that service to Long Lake, short and long term? What ownership interest would Long Lake have in fire department assets purchased after the proposed transfer of ownership (i.e. Would the cities jointly own purchased assets similar to the joint ownership model presently used? Is something different proposed?)